



## COFARM FOUNDATION

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

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# INTRODUCTION

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The food we eat, together with how and where it is produced, profoundly matters. Our food system impacts our health and wellbeing; it impacts our communities and economies; it impacts our natural ecosystems and environments.

Currently, two-thirds of adults and one third of children in the UK are overweight or obese, a crisis which is projected to cost our economy £50bn by 2050. Diabetes alone already costs the National Health Service £1.5m every hour, or 10% of the NHS budget.

At the same time, chemical contamination of our food from the use of herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and fertilisers is causing unknown and relatively untested human health impacts.

There is a growing awareness that the enthusiastic post-war adoption of oil and chemical dependent, industrial agricultural systems - whilst creating primary production efficiency gains over the medium-term - is responsible for the food system at large today accounting for over 30% of humanity's total greenhouse gas emissions.

Agriculture, primarily via its contribution to habitat and ecosystem destruction is also one of the primary drivers of biodiversity loss.

Historically, our food and farming systems have played a key role in forming the fabric of our communities and cultures in the UK, but this fabric is fast unravelling. Today the average age of a farmer in Britain is fifty-nine and very few young people view

farming as a viable career path. This is due to small-scale and family farmers often receiving as little as 7% of the retail price of their produce from wholesale buyers. And as the purchasing power of the wholesaler increases, so farms are sucked deeper into a 'race to the bottom' to produce more food for less reward.

Industrial farming methods degrade soils and erode their ability to support the production of healthy crops without the use of increasing amounts of expensive, harmful chemical inputs. It is therefore not hard to understand why more and more family farmers are throwing in the towel and selling-up to multinational corporate investors. This trend not only erodes the foundations upon which our communities are built but must also raise serious questions about the ability of the UK to feed itself sustainably in the future.

Whilst this backdrop may appear bleak, the case for change could not be clearer. Happily, the case is now better understood by business leaders, academics, policy and decision-makers at local to global levels.

In the pages that follow, we re-imagine our food system and the transformative role it can play in regenerating our communities, our economy and our environment. Most importantly, we set out an optimistic yet pragmatic plan for enabling this transformation. We hope you will join us in realising this vision.

## OUR VISION

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By 2030 everyone in the United Kingdom will have access to local, sustainably produced food and opportunities to enjoy growing and sharing it with others.

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## OUR PURPOSE

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We bring people together to grow and share delicious, nutritious food and help build stronger, healthier ecosystems and communities.

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## OUR VALUES

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**LOVING** - we foster love, respect and awareness of ourselves, each other and our natural environment.

**OPTIMISTIC** - we recognise that humanity faces significant environmental, economic and social challenges. But we are optimists and believe we can overcome these challenges together.

**VALUABLE** - we think about 'value' in very broad terms. We continually iterate our business model to create, capture, measure and deliver maximum value to the communities and beneficiaries we serve, our environment and our local economies.

**EQUITABLE** - we champion fair access to safe, nutritious and sustainably produced food and recognise this as a fundamental human right.

**DIVERSE** - we celebrate diversity and understand it as vital to maintaining healthy, vibrant human communities, farming systems and natural ecosystems.

# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

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## THE COMMUNITY – OUR PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

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CoFarm Foundation's wholly owned subsidiary – CoFarm Cambridge – is piloting a new community farming model with and for communities in Cambridge. Once we have demonstrated that our model is both sustainable and scalable, we will identify communities throughout the UK who would like to implement it.

We engage with local communities through five distinct stakeholder categories:

- Major employers in the local business community
- Health, wellbeing and social service providers and commissioners
- Schools, colleges and further education providers
- Community-based organisations, NGO's and special interest groups
- Individual households

## OUR WIDER STAKEHOLDERS

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Collaboration is central to our operating model. Additional stakeholders we will partner with to realise our vision include:

- Local authorities and relevant national government departments and directorates
- Farmers and major landowners, including the National Trust, The Wellcome Trust, County Farms, Historic Houses, Church Estates Commissioners and Crown Estates
- RSPB, Natural England, The Wildlife Trusts and other organisations concerned with enhancing biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and natural capital
- The Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce
- Universities, policymakers and researchers in the fields of sustainable agriculture and agroecology, biodiversity conservation, nutrition, health and wellbeing, food sovereignty, economic inclusion and social science

# OUR STRATEGY

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We will work with our stakeholders to create a national network of local **community-based farms** which are **economically** and **ecologically sustainable** and improve the **health and wellbeing** of people and local communities.

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## 1.0 COMMUNITY-BASED FARMS

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Aim: to facilitate greater community cohesion by co-creating a network of regenerative, agroecological farms with and for local communities.

CoFarm Foundation will:

- Work with farmers and communities to co-create community farms that produce food of the highest quality and nutritional value to be distributed on fair and equitable terms directly to members of the local community
- Develop simple, community-focussed 'field kitchens' (and utilise existing local infrastructure such as schools, pubs and community centres) - to prepare and provide nutritious, seasonal food for communities
- Work with enlightened landowners to rent and acquire land to be farmed for maximum local community benefit
- Work with farmers to integrate 'co-farming' into their diversification strategy by hosting and running local 'CoFarms' on some or all of their farm holdings
- Design and manage our farms according to the FAO's 10 elements of agroecology\*

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\* [\*The 10 Elements of Agroecology: Guiding the transition to sustainable food and agricultural systems; Food & Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations \(opens a link to FAO's website\).\*](#)

## 2.0 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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Aim: to develop a financially sustainable, scalable business model which keeps money flowing around local communities and contributes to the creation of more inclusive local and national economies.

CoFarm Foundation will:

- Partner with local businesses, with an emphasis on knowledge-based industries and other sectors where our value proposition can be demonstrated most clearly
- Design and frame our value propositions to ensure we can quantify, explain and capture all of the social, economic and environmental value we create
- Contract with commissioning bodies to deliver outcome-based services which improve health and wellbeing and deliver long-term budget savings to publicly funded services
- Devise a fair and appropriate mechanism for enabling value to be delivered to co-farming subscribers, staff and volunteers
- Develop a digital platform for farms implementing the CoFarm business model to efficiently and cost effectively:
  - manage CoFarm subscriptions, billing, payments and deliveries;
  - benefit from bulk purchase discounts on equipment and supplies;
  - track farm inputs, outputs and outcomes and demonstrate our collective societal and environmental impact
  - streamline the process for CoFarms to access and claim subsidies and outcome-based payments for the delivery of public goods

## 3.0 ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Aim: to facilitate a return to diverse, healthy and carbon-positive habitats and ecosystems throughout the UK.

CoFarm Foundation will:

- Support the establishment of farms across the UK which operate according to the principles of agroecology
- Focus on increasing crop diversity and biological diversity on and surrounding each CoFarm
- Support the design and management of CoFarms which provide enhanced ecosystem services and increase natural capital stocks
- Focus on restoring, building and maintaining soil health
- Create and manage natural infrastructure for capturing and storing carbon
- Design and implement systems for sustainably capturing and managing water

## 4.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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Aim: to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities throughout the UK.

CoFarm Foundation will:

- Foster deeper connections between people in families, communities and workplaces through the shared experience of producing and eating safe, delicious and nutritious food
- Support, educate and empower people to transform their eating and physical activity habits for optimal nutrition and health
- Provide opportunities for people to immerse themselves in the natural world whilst undertaking light horticultural activities in a supportive and nurturing environment

- Design our farm-based activities to optimise opportunities to maintain good mental health and wellbeing for all participants

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## 5.0 INTERNAL

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Aim: ensure that CoFarm Foundation and its trading subsidiaries are sustainably resourced and well-managed organisations, enabling us to holistically increase community cohesion, health and wellbeing, natural capital and economic inclusion in the UK.

We recognise that, to realise our vision, we need to ensure our organisation is fit-for purpose and can maintain good financial health.

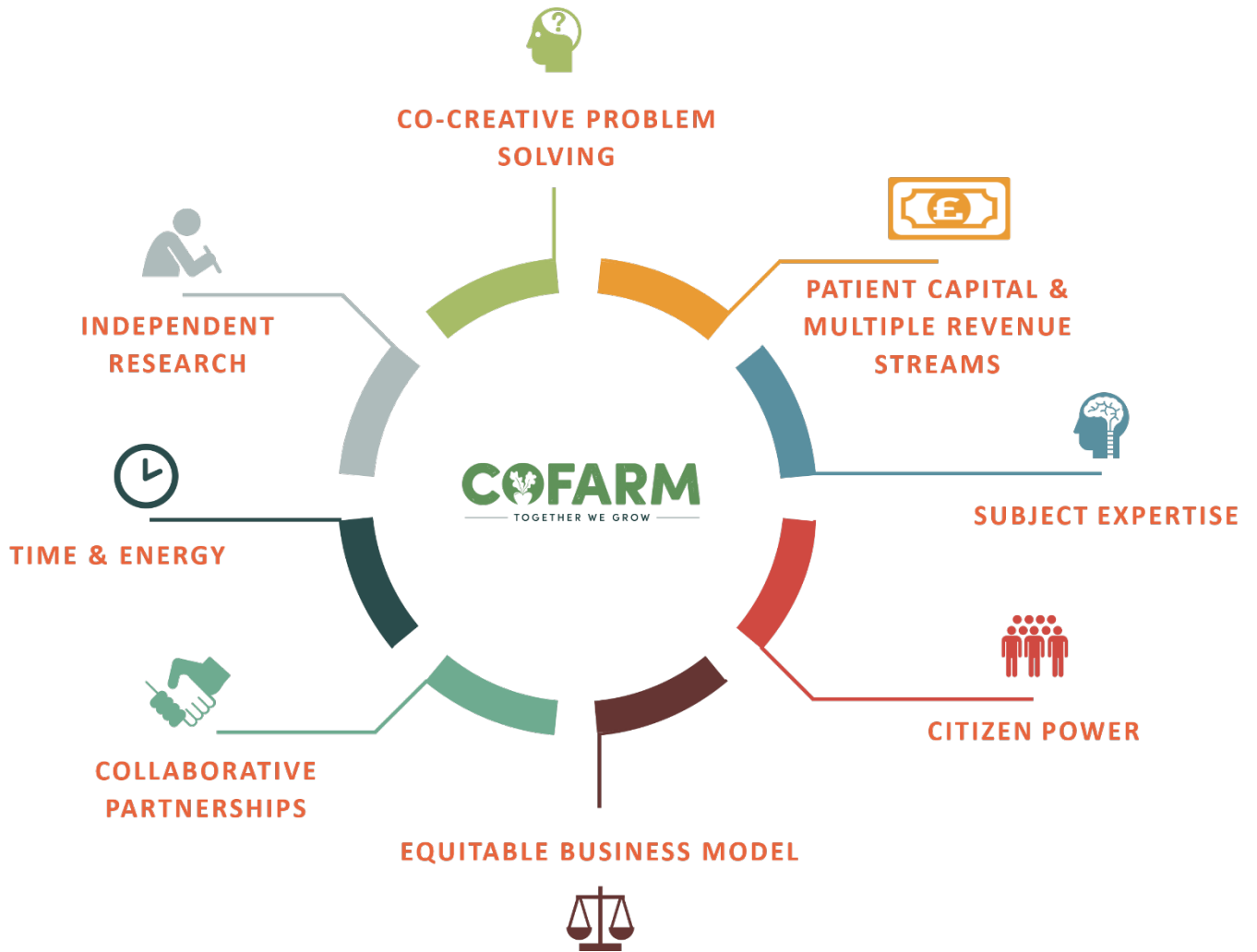
CoFarm Foundation will:

- Ensure that our work remains rooted in communities and is shaped according to local needs
- Build the knowledge, skills and capacity of our directors, staff and volunteers to be as effective as possible in all areas of the organisation's work
- Develop and implement effective governance; financial; human resource; sales and marketing management systems
- Be creative and innovative in exploring all appropriate opportunities for creating, capturing and delivering value
- Implement rigorous internal monitoring systems and independent external analysis of our work, using these findings to drive continual business model innovation and increase our impact



# APPENDIX: OUR MODEL

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# APPENDIX: OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

